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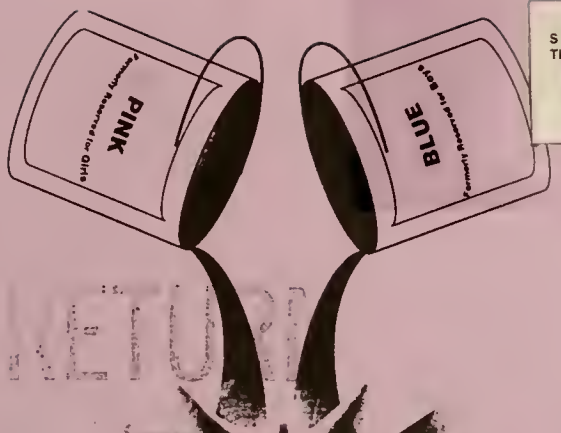

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Think Purple Week
February 10-14 1992

WHAT IS "THINK PURPLE WEEK"?

Think Purple Week is a week of celebration! We are celebrating equity in education and in Montana. Think Purple is a week for all classes to focus on their equity issues in subjects like math, science, social studies and women in history.

Boys and girls can work together to understand each other and to help one another in many ways. The issues of discrimination and how everyone is hurt by such behaviors can be discussed in school. Classes can develop ways to decrease discrimination - first in the class and then in the home, the workplace, and in situations in society. Students need to think about how they would feel if they were discriminated against and then discuss what they can do to change the discrimination that exists in their school and their community.

Think Purple is a week of fun and celebration of the ways males and females can work together effectively to create a better society for all.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Several community councils and commissions issue official proclamations declaring February 10-14, 1992 as "Think Purple Week." Here is a sample for your community:

WHEREAS, the future strength of our nation depends on the quality of human understanding and the full development of the potential of all people; and

WHEREAS, artificial and unconscious restrictions of gender limitations on the types of work and courses a person may choose inhibit full participation of females and males in the economy and in school; and

WHEREAS, faculty, counselors, administrators, teachers and parents can help students consider unlimited career and course opportunities regardless of gender, symbolized by purple (combination of pink and blue); and

WHEREAS, Montana's male and female students will need skills in and appreciation of diversity as they face the future;

We therefore designate the week of February 10-14, 1992 as "Think Purple Week" in _____ to encourage the full development of females and males and their right to enjoy unlimited educational and employment opportunities.

Signed _____
Date _____
Title _____

SUCCESS STORIES FROM THINK PURPLE 1991

• **GESA Class Projects** - GESA participants each year must develop a teaching resource unit. In Kalispell and other sites, GESA teachers developed packets of materials for distribution to other teachers with ideas on how to celebrate the week. Packets included ideas for visual aids, bias surveys, proclamations and PSA's, etc.

• **Community Efforts** - Community efforts included speakers at lunch meetings of business and community groups, proclamations, bill board publicity, and TV interviews with public officials.

• **Northern Montana College** - and other campuses used the week to emphasize its human relations goals by focusing on sex discrimination and nontraditional career choices.

• **School Contests** - elementary and middle schools hosted poster contests for students to develop the most eye-catching visual presentation of the need for boys and girls to be treated equally in school and society.

• **Broadcast Support** - television and radio stations in the Kalispell area ran public service announcements for the week before and the week of the celebration.

• **Girls and Women in Sports Day** - This is February 6, 1992 and since it falls just before Think Purple Week could be part of Think Purple activities. This is a national day to celebrate females in sports and athletics, often celebrated with assemblies featuring female athletes and coaches, and large community dinners to honor them.

A SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:_____

What in the world is "Think Purple Week"?

During the week of February 10-14, 1992 Montana equity advocates will be hosting fun and informative activities to celebrate Think Purple Week. Purple, the combination of pink and blue, is the gender equity color symbolizing the need for partnerships between the sexes in school and work.

"The week is designed to draw our attention to equitable treatment of females and males through fun and information," said Nancy Keenan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. "Equity work isn't a guilt-trip - it's good education and good employment that benefit females and males as partners, not adversaries." The Gender Equity Office of OPI joins the Gender Equity Office of Higher Education in sponsoring the week statewide.

Think Purple Week will be visible in this community in school projects, bulletin boards, poster contests, nontraditional speakers in classes, and celebration of girls in sports. "We know that gender bias and stereotype work in subconscious ways to send messages about what we can and cannot do because of our gender. Sponsors promote the fact that the 90s will require skills in and appreciation of diverse contributions to work and community. "Think Purple Week is a fun way to raise our community's consciousness about the importance of equal opportunity," commented _____, a local sponsor of the week.

For more information about activities in this area contact :_____.

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

These announcements are run free of charge by your local radio and TV stations. Submit them in plenty of time and double space the copy for easier reading by announcers.

"You mean I'm biased if I think women can't be heavy equipment operators or police officers."

"That's right, Roger. In this day our economy needs every qualified person, regardless of their gender. I bet you think that blue is for boys and pink is for girls, too, don't you!"

"Well, why not? That's the way it's always been - and it's been fine so far, hasn't it?"

"We may think so, but there are still unconscious and subtle barriers to equal opportunity in school and workplace, Roger. That's what THINK PURPLE WEEK is all about... to raise our awareness of the ways that we still "chill out" females or males from certain classes or certain jobs. Think Purple Week is February 10-14 this year. Why don't you call _____ for more information, Roger. We could use your help on the planning team... and I bet you could use the experience!"

AAUW ROUNDTABLE ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN MONTANA

In 1990, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) conducted a nationwide study of public school students aged 9-15. The results showed significant differences on self-esteem, educational experiences and career goals between boys and girls. The Montana AAUW held a Roundtable on Educational Equity to discuss the results of the national AAUW study, as well as to identify gender equity issues in Montana. Business, Education and Media leaders attended the Helena Roundtable on January 15, 1992. Strategies for removing gender bias from Montana's educational system were also addressed. For more information on holding a Roundtable in your area contact Stacy Jovick, President, Montana AAUW, 406-222-3407.

NEWS FLASH

On January 16, 1992, the Board of Public Education addressed many of the issues concerning gender equity in education. The Gender Equity Task Force, appointed by the Board, presented a Position Statement, a Joint Resolution and a Plan that focused on the diverse equity needs in Montana. After discussion, the Board voted to accept the Gender Equity position statement (printed in full on the following page). In addition, the Board will be sending a draft Joint Resolution for review and comment to the Governor, The Board of Regents, and the Office of Public Instruction. The Board of Public Education hopes to join with these groups to support and promote the infusion of gender equity throughout the educational system in Montana. The Plan was accepted and noted, and will return to the Task Force for further refinements and input from involved educational agencies.

What can you do? We all must share our commitment to gender equity in education in Montana! Contact members of your local School Boards, members of the Board of Education, members of the Board of Regents; and members of the Montana School Boards Association, Montana Rural Education Association, School Administrators of Montana, Montana Federation of Teachers, and the Montana Indian Education Association. Remind them that gender equity in education is imperative for the success of all of Montana's students. They must take the first step in promoting the Board of Education's Position Statement and in joining the Board of Education in a Joint Resolution, as well as, enacting and enforcing a Plan to achieve these goals.

The following is the position statement enacted by the Board of Public Education on January 16, 1992.

GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN MONTANA

As we approach the year 2000 and enter a decade that is demanding more and more from our students, we recognize that it has been 17 years since Title IX was implemented to prohibit sex discrimination in education. We celebrate the contributions that all have made to educational equity. Title IX and Montana's legal provisions continue to have serious and substantive implications for our educational system. Changes in curriculum, school codes, employment practices, athletics, instructional materials and methods will undoubtedly occur when educators, parents and citizens examine their schools for gender bias in policy and practice.

It is now appropriate for Montanans to take a close look again at how "gender-fair" our education is for females and males. The reality facing our graduates is that in the next decade there will be tremendous opportunities for our female new entrants into the workforce. We are committed to making sure all of Montana's students, male and female, are ready to enter and be competitive in the twenty-first century. The Board of Public Education renews it active implementation of equal educational opportunity for all students, males and females, and its support for our teachers who will provide it.

Disparities between female and male achievement are evident in "gender gaps" in standardized test scores, in career choices, in the presence of sexual harassment and intimidation in schools, and in gender imbalance in teaching and administrative personnel. A special conern is the compounded effects of racism and sexism on Montana's culturally diverse females.

The Board of Public Education is committed to an incremental plan for strengthening gender equity in education to address these and other disparities. It is the intent of this plan to infuse equity strategies and content in three major areas: teacher education programs, accreditation, and certification. The Board commits itself to an annual review of progress toward these goals, and to on-going revision and redirection based on the reflection and deliberation of the Board after each review.

The goals of this plan can only be achieved with the involvement of all key participants in Montana education: educators, administrators, school board trustees, students, parents, staff, community and educational organizations, businesses, teacher organizations, tribal organizations and councils, OPI and the Office of Higher Education, the tribal colleges, and the University System. Montana's future requires the best citizens and leaders, and we can do no less than insure that their education is both free of discrimination and affirming of each individual's abilities and talents.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY?

Everything from bulletin boards to radio/TV announcements and bill boards... The goal is to raise awareness of gender stereotyping/bias and how it affects our students and colleagues. Here are some suggestions:

- bulletin boards on theme
- distribute pamphlets and buttons
- decorate store windows
- radio and TV public service announcements
- community council adopt proclamation
- place ads in local papers
- invite nontraditional speakers to school
- librarians feature books on people in nontraditional roles, women in history, etc.
- students interview nontraditional women for class reports
- Title IX coordinator encourages teachers to equity surveys to detect bias
- special showings of equity films (available from State AV Library)
- class unit on gender bias in the media and its effects of females and males
- class use "What would my life be like if tomorrow I woke up as a member of the opposite gender" exercise to help students identify deeper bias and stereotype
- write gender fair fairy tales or equity rewrites of older tales

KEY RESOURCES & CONTACTS

These groups and individuals are allies in promoting "Think Purple Week" in your schools and community:

Parent-Teacher-Student Councils
AAUW Local Branch
Business and Professional Women
Vocational Technical Centers
Community and Tribal Colleges
Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement Teachers (GESA)
TESA Teachers
School Administrators and Trustees
Regional Equity Network Representatives (see last panel)
Title IX Coordinators in each school district
Activities Directors
Guidance Counselors
YMCA and YWCA
Scouts and clubs

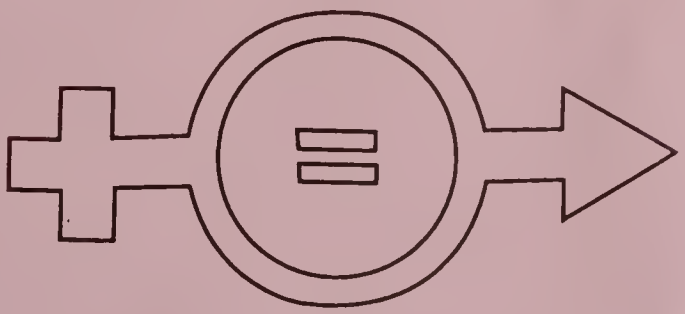
WHY IS EQUITY SO IMPORTANT TODAY?

"THINK PURPLE" means THINK EQUITY. It is not blue for boys and pink for girls, but working together to get purple - partnerships between males and females. The U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1990 noted that only 7.3% of families are "traditional," having a husband that is employed, a wife who is not, and several children. In 1980, nearly 20,000 households in Montana were headed by women compared to 6,205 headed by males alone. The median income of these male-headed households was $16,600 while the median for female-headed households was $9,100.

These statistics, combined with the fact that by the year 2000, 85% of all new entrants into the workforce will be women and ethnic and cultural minorities, emphasize a need for gender equity in education and society. Girls and women need equitable education so they can be integral and productive contributors to our state's economy. Boys and men who can be stereotypically guided away from liberal arts subjects and non-technical careers deserve equitable preparation for a wider variety of choices as well.

In today's society, our males and females have a right to expect the most diverse variety of skill development and educational activities.

Our Montana females and males must be able to work together in equitable partnerships for a strong Montana future. It can start with "Think Purple Week" activities to raise awareness, and it will end in the elimination of barriers to a bias-free future.



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